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Maruti Suzuki unveils India's 1st flex fuel car

Maruti Suzuki on Thursday launched India's first flex-fuel passenger vehicle capable of running on ethanol-petrol blends ranging from E20 to E100. The country's largest carmaker said the vehicle, Wagon R Flex Fuel, features an advanced engine control unit that automatically adapts to varying ethanol blends, allowing customers to operate the car on any mix of petrol and ethanol | **P15**

WITH THIS ISSUE

CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE

INDULGE

42 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

OPPN CHURN AS DMK TO SKIP MONDAY MEET

Centre engaging with DMK and TMC amidst buzz on second shot at delimitation bill

PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

THE Opposition INDIA bloc appears headed for a major churn, with two of its key constituents — the DMK and the Trinamool Congress — grappling with challenges that could test the alliance's unity and future.

On Thursday, the DMK announced it would skip the INDIA bloc meeting on June 8, citing discontent over Congress "betrayal". Long-time allies Congress and DMK are at loggerheads after the grand old party joined the Vijay-led TVK government in Tamil Nadu following the DMK alliance's defeat in the assembly polls. "While the DMK will not attend this meeting, it will continue, as always, to raise its voice on issues affecting the welfare of the nation that may be brought forward by the other parties participating in the meeting," said a party statement.

Incidentally, the DMK received approval from the Lok Sabha secretariat on Thursday to sit separate from the Congress.

Though TMC chief Mamata Banerjee and party general secretary Abhishek Banerjee are expected to attend the June 8 meeting, their party appears to be on the brink of a upheaval, with speculation on a exodus of its parliamentarians. The unrest follows a rebel faction backed by 58 MLAs claiming to be the "real TMC". At least nine TMC Lok Sabha MPs and three Rajya Sabha members are said to be negotiating with the BJP. Besides, sources said at least two Lok Sabha MPs are in touch with the Congress. With 28 MPs in the Lok Sabha and 13 in the Rajya Sabha, the TMC remains the third-largest party after the BJP and the Congress.

The developments come amid speculation that the Centre is likely to reintroduce the delimitation bill during the upcoming Monsoon Session and has been engaging with the DMK and TMC to strengthen its position. In the previous Budget session, the constitutional amendment linking delimitation to the women's reservation bill was defeated by the Opposition, though the NDA held 298 seats in the LS. With the DMK and TMC holding 22 and 28 MPs respectively, all eyes are now on the two parties.

CM keeps Finance, DCM takes Revenue, KBG gets B'luru; Ramalinga may quit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister DK Shivakumar on Thursday allotted portfolios to 13 cabinet colleagues, which have been cleared by Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot.

Shivakumar retained Finance, Cabinet Affairs, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, Intelligence and all unallocated portfolios. The key Bengaluru Development portfolio, previously held by Shivakumar, was allotted to Krishna Byregowda. Senior leader Ramalinga Reddy, who was eying the same portfolio, was sulking over being allotted Water Resources - Major and Medium Irrigation, also previously held by Shivakumar. It is said the CM had promised Reddy Bengaluru Development during a similar situation in 2023.

Reddy threat: CM meets Siddu

Ramalinga Reddy is likely to resign from his ministerial post on Friday, according to sources privy to him. Sources said Reddy took this step after he was denied Bengaluru Development portfolio and offered Major and Medium Irrigation.

Shivakumar met former CM Siddaramiah and discussed the issue to convince Reddy, sources added. He also cited not being comfortable to travel long distances and a promise Shivakumar made during 2023 as reasons. **P4, 5**

CM's TEAM A

Priyank Kharge: Home (excluding intelligence), IT & BT, E-governance

Krishna Byregowda: Bengaluru Development

Dr Yathindra Siddaramaiah: Urban Development

Byrathi Suresh: Transport

Ramalinga Reddy: Major & Medium Irrigation

U T Khader: Health & Family Welfare.

Eshwar Khandre: Rural Development & Panchayat Rajf

K H Muniyappa, K J George, M B Patil, Dr Sharan Prakash Patil, and Satish Jarakiholi retain their previous portfolios

5 KILLED IN BIHAR ICU

The charred remains of the ICU of a private hospital in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district on Thursday, where five patients choked to death following a pre-dawn blaze. The staff allegedly ran away, leaving the patients in the lurch | PTI | **P12**

EXPRESS READ

Govt offers 50% discount on pending traffic fines

Bengaluru: The state government is offering a 50% concession for vehicle owners to settle pending traffic fines recorded between 1991 and 2022. The discount can be availed from June 21 to July 10. According to the order on Thursday, the decision was taken following a recommendation from the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority, which noted that 77.41 lakh such cases are pending across the state, involving unpaid fines of Rs 2,827 crore.

India, Venezuela agree to deepen ties

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

INDIA and Venezuela on Thursday agreed to deepen cooperation in energy and explore a broader economic partnership spanning critical minerals, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, automobiles and mining, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held extensive talks with Venezuelan acting President Delcy Rodriguez.

The meeting came at a time when India is seeking to diversify crude oil supplies following disruptions in global energy markets caused by the West Asia crisis, while Venezuela is looking to expand export markets and attract investment after years of the US sanctions-related isolation.

The focal point of the talks was on long-term energy partnership, with both sides highlighting their natural complementarity. "They see India as a stable demander for many years to come. Therefore, there exists a perfect complementarity for India and Venezuela to work in the energy sector, in both upstream and downstream," Secretary (East) in the External Affairs Ministry Rudrendra Tandon told reporters after the meeting.

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